```
VZCZCXRO6634
OO RUEHBC RUEHDBU RUEHDE RUEHDIR RUEHKUK RUEHPW
DE RUEHBUL #2324/01 2000215
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 190215Z JUL 07
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9188
INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
```

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 002324

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/FO, SCA/A, PRM/ANE
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR AID/ANE, AID/DCHA/DG
NSC FOR AHARRIMAN
RELEASABLE TO NATO/ISAF

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/09/2017
TAGS: PGOV PREF PREL AF IR PK
SUBJECT: UNHCR VIEWS ON AGHANISTAN, IRANIAN DEPORTEES AND

REFUGEES IN PAKISTAN

Classified By: Ambassador William B. Wood for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: In a July 5 meeting, Ambassador and UNHCR
Country Representative Salvatore Lombardo discussed a wide
range of issues. Chief among these were the politicization
of the Afghan refugee situation in Pakistan, Afghan deportees
from Iran and concerns regarding President Karzai,s
forthcoming selection of a new Minister for Refugees and
Repatriation. END SUMMARY
-

Afghan Refugees in Pakistan

¶2. (C) Lombardo noted that, while repatriations of Afghan
refugees were proceeding, GOP/GOA "politicization8 of the
refugee issue and, particularly, the camp closings was
souring the bilateral dialogue. Afghan refusal to
acknowledge their lack of capacity to absorb large numbers of
returns, coupled with unreasonable Pakistani return targets
and the GOP,s broad brush characterization of the refugees
and the camps as &security threats,8 made for a difficult
working environment. Both sides, he suggested, need to
reduce their rhetoric and set reasonable expectations if
progress is to be achieved. Returns are going to continue to
be slow. Most of the Afghans remaining in Pakistan have been
there for many years and, given security and economic
conditions in Afghanistan, are unlikely to return anytime
soon, even with the camp closings. (NOTE: In Kachigari, the
first and, to date, the only one of the four designated camps
near to closing, 30,000 of the camp,s 54,000 residents have
&self-relocated8) disappeared into the Pakistani
population. END NOTE).
-

Deportations of Afghans from Iran

¶3. (C) The Ambassador asked if there was, perhaps, more than
one factor driving Iran's decision to expel undocumented
Afghan workers. Lombardo,s answer was an emphatic &yes.8
First, Iran,s economy, especially in the border regions, but
even in Tehran, is dependent upon cheap Afghan labor. This is
not new. Iran has struggled with this problem for years.
There were 400,000 deportations of illegal Afghans from Iran
in 2006. Lombardo noted the degree to which the economies
of a number of Afghan provinces are absolutely dependent upon
the remittances, via the informal &Hawala8 system. He
suggested that this traditional symbiosis was being
undermined by domestic Iranian political concerns, Iran,s
sputtering economy and, especially, by Afghan association

with the drug trade, a growing problem in Iran and a source
of much public concern. These factors have come together to
make the deportation of Afghan &illegals8 a popular policy
for the beleaguered Amedinejad regime. Lombardo also
mentioned growing Iranian concern about incidents of
political violence in Sistan Va Baluchestan province, which
adjoins the Afghan province of Nimrooz and Pakistan,s
Baluchistan.

¶4. (U) The UNHCR Rep observed that Iran has been more
practical and responsible than Pakistan in dealing with their
920,000 Afghan refugees. He pointed out that, among the
140,000 plus deportees since April 21, there have been only
20 cases involving individuals holding valid Amayesh II
cards, currently valid Afghan refugees. Iran has even
proposed offering as many as 30,000 renewable working visas
to refugees who return their families to Afghanistan but wish
to return to Iran to work.

¶5. (C) Lombardo reported that UNHCR has urged the GOA to
create a bilateral channel with the Iranians to seek a
solution amenable to both governments. He noted that the
number of deportees has declined in the recent weeks
including noticeably fewer families. He expressed concern,
however, that recent charges by the Afghan Independent Human
Rights Commission (AIHRC) of extensive human rights
violations by Iranian authorities during the deportations may
provoke the GOI. These charges are, at best, anecdotal.
Lombardo indicated that he had recently told Afghanistan,s
Second Vice President Mohammad Karim Khalili that such
unsubstantiated charges could only make matters worse.
Khalili, he thought, took the point.
-

New Minister for Refugee Affairs

KABUL 00002324 002 OF 002

¶6. (C) Lombardo observed that, depite weaknesses within the
Ministry, UNHCR had a very good working relationship with the
Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MORR). He noted,
however, that there was a &sad lack of capacity8 within the
GOA to deal with refugee issues. Lombardo suggested that, in
terms of effectiveness, the MORR had been consistently
unfortunate in the selection of ministers and observed that
the current minister) recently ousted by the Parliament but
still &acting8) had been a particularly weak choice.

¶7. (C) For this reason, Lombardo felt that it is imperative
that Karzai select a competent manager with strong ties to
the Palace. He emphasized that it should not be a
regional/ethnic choice but a political "player8 with
national credibility. Lombardo confided that one of the
names on the President,s "short list8 is Rahmatullah Nabil,
Director of Security at the Palace. UNHCR thinks highly of
him) he,s a former UNHCR employee - and has been quietly
lobbying on his behalf. However, Lombardo noted that he
feared the President might be reluctant to release Nabil from
his present position. The Ambassador agreed and urged that
UNHCR identify a second choice to avoid an all or nothing
situation. The UNHCR Rep agreed and promised to share names
with the Embassy as soon as possible.

WOOD